WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

High technology cooperation with U.S.

*67. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Prime Minister during his visit to New York in last September referred to the scope in high technology co-operation; and

(b) if so, the details if fields where such co-operation has started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) and (d) During their meeting in New York on 12 September 2002, Prime Minister and U.S. President George W. Bush agreed to explore possibilities of expanding cooperation in space, diverse forms of energy, high-technology commerce and science.

India and the United States have initiated five safety related projects for safeguarded nuclear facilities. Exchange of visits by U.S. and Indian nuclear regulatory officials has also commenced. In the area of space, the two sides have renewed the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in earth and atmospheric sciences. The United States has offered to resume co-operation in space, applications for sustainable development, whether research missions, tele-medicine, tele-education and disaster management. Joint workshops on civilian space application and research have also started.

The two sides have established a bilateral High Technology Cooperation Group, which held its first meeting in Washington D.C. on 1 -2 July 2003. This is the first such group that the United States has set up with any country. The Group discussed regulatory and promotional issues related to enhancing trade in 'dual use' goods and technologies, as well as facilitating cooperation in areas such as information technology, life sciences, nano-technology and defence technology.

The two sides are also pursuing collaborative science and technology projects in the areas of health and communicable diseases, environment and climate change, and renewable and clean energy. Under the aegis of the 1998 agreement between Department of Science and Technology and the U.S. National Science Foundation, there are currently about 65 scientific research projects supported by various labs,

institutions and universities in India and U.S.A. The India-U.S. Science and Technology Forum was established in 2000 to catalyse India-U.S. scientific collaboration.

Telephone facilities in the villages of Himachal Pradesh

*69. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages in Himachal Pradesh which have not been provided with telephone facilities as yet, district-wise; and

(b) by when this facility is likely to be provided?

. THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) Out of a total 16925 villages in Himachal Pradesh, 16585 villages haves already been provided with telecom facilities as on 31.3.2003. Out of the uncovered 340 villages, 61 villages are de-populated. Remaining 279 villages in Himachal Pradesh are without telephone facility. District -wise details are as under:—

Circle	Name of District	No. of uncovered Villages
Himachal	Shimla	18
Pradesh	Kullu	0
	Hamirpur	1
	Bilaspur	12
	Lahaul & Spiti	33
	Chamba	52
	Kangra	41
	Kinnaur	16
	Solan	7
	Sirmour	33
	Mandi	66
	Una	0
	Total:	279

All these villages are planned to be provided with telephone facility on satellite based Village Public Telephones (VPTs) during 2003-04 subject to availability of funds and equipment in time.